

Understanding foster brothers

Jack 0:02

This is Jack and I'm not here with cat, but I am here with Jack Jr. Jr is in the studio today, to talk about being a foster brother. welcome Jack Jr.

Jack Jr 0:15

Hello.

Jack 0:15

So let me ask you a very serious question. What is your favorite drink at Starbucks.

Jack Jr 0:23

It's the dragon fruit refresher with lemonade.

Jack 0:27

Yeah, you like that, and lately we've been ordering it without ice because when you get it with ice, it's like three sips and it's gone right

Jack Jr 0:33

yes,

Jack 0:34

Jr, What was the first time you remember hearing about foster care.

Jack Jr 0:39

I feel is like, I was seven or so.

Jack 0:44

Yeah, you were six, six almost seven years old when we first started talking about it, probably, why were you in support of us specifically becoming a foster family.

Jack Jr 0:56

When I went to friend's houses. They had brothers and sisters to play with, but I didn't. It was just me and my mom and my dad.

Jack 1:05

Yeah. So you wanted, you wanted to have someone to play with.

Jack Jr 1:11

Yeah,

Jack 1:11

can you tell us what you can about how you came to be part of our family.

Jack Jr 1:16

So what happened was I went to an orphanage. Do you remember living there and all. I remember getting a burn on my foot. That's about it.

Jack 1:26

Yeah, you've got a few burns on your feet. But how did you become part of our family? These crazy wait people came in,

Jack Jr 1:35

I ran to them, and I hugged them

Jack 1:37

We had fun,

Jack Jr 1:38

we did. Yes I think so. We were there a few months, and there's a bunch of court, stuff, stuff about sprite is for adults, fanta is for babies. And we came to America, I was adopted.

Jack 1:58

And at the time, Daddy and I just had you. Right,

Jack Jr 2:02

yeah, yeah.

Jack 2:03

And was that fun.

Jack Jr 2:04

Yes.

Jack 2:06

Did you not appreciate being the only child at the time,

Jack Jr 2:09

I did. Yeah,

Jack 2:10

because we got to do a lot more fun stuff. What do you remember about what you thought it was going to be like to be a foster brother.

Jack Jr 2:18

Honestly, I thought it was gonna be like having this sleep over long sleep over.

Jack 2:25

And what was it like when you first became a foster brother.

Jack Jr 2:28

It was not like a sleepover.

Jack 2:30

Well, how was it different from asleep over there's

Jack Jr 2:32

diapers,

Jack 2:33

you thought the kids would be older.

Jack Jr 2:35

Yeah, usually in sleepovers it's older kids that come in now, little kids that come

Jack 2:42

when we first started fostering what we had told them was that, as long as the children were younger than you. We didn't have an age preference. If you had told us initially you always want to be the oldest brother, when we gave them pretty much leeway on age, our first placements were how old

Jack Jr 3:00

one and two.

Jack 3:01

Yeah, yeah, they were one and two, you were expecting someone to run around and play with outside, and we had one kid who couldn't even crawl and going kid who didn't necessarily always want to play with you outside, right.

Jack Jr 3:14

Yeah, we had good times we had bad times I get bitten the stomach mom got a black eye

Jack 3:23

two year olds, the bite was probably one of the things that stick out the most to me about how you were disappointed by foster care because she looked at you and you were in the hallway, and you put your arms out because you thought that she would give you a hug, and she went running to you and I remember the look on your face was like so happy. Oh my gosh, she's gonna give me a hug. She came running to you and you look so happy and you had your arms out for her, and she ran at you and beat you in the chest so hard I think it was like seven months before that star went away, and every time I saw that score I was like I remember that moment of disappointment for you and that was really hard. Brothers and sisters,

Jack Jr 4:01

yeah poop on the wall that kind of stuff.

Jack 4:03

, what is the hardest thing about being a foster brother.

Jack Jr 4:09

Probably knowing what they're going through to get to where they are.

Jack 4:14

Do they sometimes tell you things that they don't tell the rest of us,

Jack Jr 4:18

kind of, I mean, they are telling me about crazy things that went on.

Jack 4:24

What is the best thing about being a foster brother,

Jack Jr 4:27

getting to play euth them. When you do play with them they are happy.

Jack 4:32

And if it's you're giving them attention.

Jack Jr 4:34

Yeah and it makes me happy that they're happy.

Jack 4:36

So the best thing for you about being a foster brother is when you play with them and give them attention, and they appreciate it, and then everybody's happy.

Jack Jr 4:45

Yeah,

Jack 4:46

I know one of the things that's hard for you as a foster brother sometimes, is when you try and give them attention and make an effort to play with them in the way they want to be played with, and they get mad at you or bossy with you I know that that's one of the hard things for you.

Jack Jr 5:02

Yeah,

Jack 5:02

what is it like when you, this is your family, this is your mom and dad, this is your house. You've lived here in this house as long as we have, as long as we've been parents you've been our kid, what does it feel like sometimes when kids come in and try and tell you what to do in your house,

Jack Jr 5:17

I'm like, Nah, not today, happening,

Jack 5:20

is it hard sometimes to like, be kind to them when they're coming in telling me what to do.

Jack Jr 5:26

Yeah, but when there's kids that are older than me, like, every now and then and then they tell him what to do. I can't really say, not today I'm older than you, because they're older than me,

Jack 5:38

and you can't really say something like, This is my house because you want them to feel welcome.

Jack Jr 5:42

Yeah.

Jack 5:43

So sometimes that's hard because you just have to hold it in and feel like you know who is this person who just came into my house and it's telling me what to do right. What do you think you do well as a foster brother,

Jack Jr 5:53

I think that when they're sad. I'm good at making them feel happy and comforting them.

Jack 6:00

That's true. Like I know that when they're sad sometimes you like make a fun game to cheer them up. I know one of the things that you've done with our seven year old, a lot is sometimes you'll run up and scoop him up like a baby and older like a baby and you read around and you're like oh he needs hugs and kisses, and the way that he smiles and squeals with delight when you do that even though He's seven years old and you're treating him like a baby is kind of the cutest thing ever. That's really sweet, a sweet thing that you do, what is something that you think you could do better as a foster brother

Jack Jr 6:33

have more patience,

Jack 6:34

sometimes it's hard for adults to have patience with kids with behaviors. So it's really hard for us to expect someone who's 11 years old to have patience with people with behaviors, but I think you do a really good job but yeah it's definitely something that you can work on and everybody can work on to get a little better at, let me ask you a question. What was the hardest day ever, as a foster brother that was probably

Jack Jr 6:57

This little kid, who would always pee herself every night.

Jack 7:03

are we talking about the child who used to punch herself in the face and ram her head into the wall,

Jack Jr 7:07

yes.

Jack 7:07

Yeah, that was,

Jack Jr 7:08

I thought that was awfully disgusting. Yeah, Water Are you drinking like these,

Jack 7:13

definitely been through it, what is the best day you've ever had as a foster brother.

Jack Jr 7:18

It was probably when you adopted our first foster kid,

Jack 7:22

so that would be little Jack. That was a pretty special day and one of the cool things about that was that happened on National Adoption Day, so I don't know if you remember but there was like, basically a party and it was really cool. I wish that we could have done it for other kids, I wouldnt have wanted to wait the additional six months or whatever but I wish we hadn't done National Adoption Day for a little Jack, because he just is so easily overwhelmed by people, if it was a less hectic day. I think it would have been less scary for him. I don't know if you remember he threw a temper tantrum right after his hearing and was running and throwing his shoes at people and in all of his adoption pictures he has no shoes on his feet you remember that it was definitely one of the best days of my life. Yeah, I'm glad that that was your best day as a foster brother, if you had a friend whose family was about to start fostering, what advice would you give your friend,

Jack Jr 8:21

Id probably tell them, You know what you got to do, buddy. You got to make sure that they know that, you know what to do until they know the rules. Well, they should ask the parents, or you questions, don't get bitten in the stomach, think that they're just going to give you a hug. unless they put their arms out to do not go.

Jack 8:44

And so what you're basically saying is you need to advocate for yourself. Once your family becomes part of a foster family, because you need to make sure that when the kids come in, you're able to stand up for yourself when you need to hide your phone,

Jack Jr 8:58

yes, yes, or it'll end up in a toilet, or in the Gulf of Mexico. Save your money up to get a safe.
Yeah, get in there, put your phone in there, and outside

Jack 9:06

when your parents biosci for Christmas because you wanted to put your stuff in, you should probably put your stuff in it.

Jack Jr 9:12

Yeah, because I usually don't do that. Yeah, I'm just saying, I'm put my popcorn in there.

Jack 9:18

You put your popcorn in your safe without your switch or your phone, and then they take your switch in your phone and they break.

Jack Jr 9:23

Yes, ma'am.

Jack 9:24

So we know that you value your Publix popcorn, more than you value your phone and your switch.

Jack Jr 9:31

No, I value my phone, my switch,

Jack 9:33

so maybe for Christmas, I should just get you a whole bunch of Publix popcorn

Jack Jr 9:36

doesn't sound bad, but it doesn't sound very good. I mean I like my popcorn. If my friends family was going to be a foster family. I tell them, advocate for yourself. Don't let them bully you make sure they know the rules and have patience. Have patience.

Jack 9:59

Right, yeah. Well, everybody has a limited amount of patience we all just need to work to have more, and that comes from understanding from where these kids are, you know, we have all these people that come and talk to us sometimes right, we have licensing and case management as guardians, out of that group of people who comes and talks to you ever.

Jack Jr 10:19

I mean, they don't come to me to talk, usually I kind of put myself in that conversation, you like to conversate Yes, I can't really get them to talk to me because they're more focused on the foster kids but I'm like, I'm here too So, let's talk.

Jack 10:34

I know one guardian ad litem who always checks on all of you guys and talks to you. Yeah, what about licensing sometimes licensing comes and talks to you too, right,

Jack Jr 10:44

rarely, but yeah. Well, in my mind I feel like it's rarely but they do

Jack 10:52

so licensing basically is the one party that checks in on you sometimes and obviously every once a while we have an amazing guardian ad litem who pops out of nowhere, it's like they love on our whole family. Can you give me a word to describe foster brothers.

Jack Jr 11:08

Most of the time, foster Brothers are very compassionate and sharing,

Jack 11:14

because you're not just sharing your house and your toys and your stuff, you're sharing your parents and your time, and all of that.

Jack Jr 11:21

And your privacy and your room

Jack 11:24

what do your friends think about you being a foster family,

Jack Jr 11:28

they're surprised of how many kids there are, they're like, Wow, you guys have any kids, it's so cool. I only got like two brothers and one sister,

Jack 11:39

so people are surprised and I think it's cool. Yeah, do you ever feel judge.

Jack Jr 11:43

No, no, no,

Jack 11:45

nobody ever feels like you're weird.

Jack Jr 11:46

No.

Jack 11:47

What would surprise most people to learn about being a foster brother

Jack Jr 11:53

saying that would surprise most people to learn about foster brothers would be that there are diapers. We change them too. Sometimes I want them to know that I changed diapers too, not often though

Jack 12:08

I mean you're a pretty incredible human being and sometimes I come downstairs and find that you've already woken kids up diaper and dress them and set them up for cartoons, so I don't think all foster brothers are like that, but you are an outstanding foster brother. What do you want people to know about foster brothers

Jack Jr 12:26

, I would want people to know about foster mothers would be that sometimes the kids that come into our house. They put stress on you because they tell you about why they're here and how this happened and know what their parents did know and their fathers not here. Yeah, we've seen our father in years. Yeah, put stress on you. you know, they went through this. A lot of the time, you had your mom and your dad. You get to see them and they don't leave you alone or have your kids on while they go like 50 miles away or more, they go like three hours away. Well, they're with their friends having Martini time.

Jack 13:14

One of the things that used to talk about a lot being difficult for you as a foster brother who was also adopted, was the fact that these kids that were in foster care, got to visit their biological parents.

Jack Jr 13:29

Yeah,

Jack 13:29

and you were always like, I never got to know, or even meet my biological parents, and they get

to see them every week, and that that was really difficult for you. Was that hard for you.

Jack Jr 13:43

Yes, it's somewhat still is but not as much as it used to be.

Jack 13:46

So, Jr, when you get really stressed out from some of the stuff that goes on in the house, with these kids who have experienced trauma, what do you do to help yourself feel better.

Jack Jr 13:57

Well, I have this awesome combo I have, where I put in my bluetooth headphones because they don't have the wires, and then I put on my noise cancelling headphones over my bluetooth headphones, but they don't play music, they're just, they just bring out the noise. Yeah, so I put those together and you normally can't hear the things besides your own voice, go in my room, take a nap, do push ups, lift weights, mostly taken out, because it gets a little far mind doing push up and lift weights, it kind of makes you feel better. But when you take a nap, you kind of forget and we come out as this whole new person like yeah like hope you come out hulk mode like whaaaa

Jack 14:50

When u were little, and you used to have temper tantrums or something like that, I'd be like, Okay, let's have a reboot, let's just lay down for a couple seconds, and then reboot yourself and come out like a different person. And once you started doing that more regularly you got really good, and it's kind of neat that now you're 11 years old and you do that for yourself because you're smart enough to acknowledge that that's something that really helps you

Jack Jr 15:12

Honestly sometimes i just take a nap right there like.

Jack 15:15

So you put your two headphones, You take a nap and then you do push ups and sit ups

Jack Jr 15:21

Yeah, or lift weights.

Jack 15:22

What are the biggest struggles that you face as a foster brother.

Jack Jr 15:26

I like my stuff and I don't want anyone else, touching my stuff without consulting me.

Jack 15:32

But you really just mean a few things, most of your things. You're very generous with. Yeah, you let everybody play with almost all your stuff, but because of

Jack Jr 15:43

I don't want them to play with my phone or my laptop or my switch without talking to me like, Hey, can I play a game with you or I would say, I don't want to play a game right now so here take it

Jack 15:54

your laptop, your switch in your phone, are the three things that you don't want people to touch, and one of the struggles you've had is that sometimes they just touch it, right. Yeah, and break it and all of that stuff. Yeah, but I can understand after going through three phones in one year

Jack Jr 16:10

my right side switch, I can't use put down the joy card anymore because life in the

Jack 16:15

I know can because you see these kids coming into foster care. You know the kinds of stuff their parents did, that led to them being here, right, what do you think the community can do to help more kids not need to come into care to help those parents so they can stay together as families,

Jack Jr 16:33

you could put them with a trusting relative for a bit like while their parents reboot but like you got to really get on the parents, because unless they're like, some parents, I know one. Some parents, they won't just do that on their own because their kids leave, they'll just be like, do what they want. So put them in rehab, that kind of stuff like use, like say, put their foot down like you have to do this.

Jack 17:00

What you're saying is be more firm with parents, on what they need to do and making use of rehab and relatives more often.

Jack Jr 17:07

Yeah, like not just random relatives, trusting relatives that you've interviewed and like I trust this guy or I trust this woman,

Jack 17:16

our kids are going to a relative tomorrow. Mm hmm. How do you feel about that.

Jack Jr 17:21

Honestly, I'm kind of happy for them.

Jack 17:23

So Jr, what are your goals for yourself to make positive change in our community.

Jack Jr 17:29

I'm going to be that guy. You know that guy with a good patience and that guy who can do football well.

Jack 17:39

Yeah, so you want to do is you want to be that guy with more patience for your foster siblings,

Jack Jr 17:44

and that they can look up to because I'm good at football or I can throw the ball well or I can really get that guy.

Jack 17:50

Well, I think you are that guy and I'm proud of you, and I love you. Listen, Jr. Jack, Jr.

Jack Jr 17:57

Yes,

Jack 17:58

thank you so much for joining us today, for sharing your experience as a foster brother, and thank you for making the long walk from the house to the studio.

Jack Jr 18:08

It wasn't that long.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>